



17391 Murphy Ave. Ste A
Irvine, CA 92614
949-863-9447 TEL
949-863-9482 FAX

September 12, 2007

Hon. Susan Golding, Chair
Blue Ribbon Task Force
MLPA Initiative
c/o California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Verbal Testimony to Draft Master Plan for MLPA project

Dear Mayor Golding:

The following is a written version of verbal testimony given to the Blue Ribbon Task Force during the teleconference meeting of September 12, 2007:

Thank you for the opportunity to present our comments. We have two additional comments regarding the master plan that will, I hope clarify, some our concerns.

The first and perhaps most important regards the discussion about changes in the section starting on page 11 - Marine Protected Areas Generally.

The BRTF member comment at the beginning of the section expresses a degree of frustration about how the current section does not accurately represent the state of science surrounding the use of MPAs. I couldn't agree with that more!

We think several years ago this process got off on the wrong foot on that subject and continues to remain out of step with the actual body of science surrounding the use of MPAs in general. Our ongoing independent review of that is bearing that out.

We disagree with the underlying message being sent in the last two sentences of the comment that implies that scientific literature is lacking regarding the effectiveness of marine protected areas with lesser protections in relationship to complete no take and that no literature comparing the various levels of protection exists. That is incorrect and a careful review of scientific literature will bear that out.

We also agree with the NAS's belief expressed in support of a scheme of MPAs with various levels of protection (zoning schemes) that ecological marine reserves (of the complete no take type) cannot satisfy all conservation goals.

Therefore we agree with the heart of the BRTF comment that we indeed do need to get to the heart of this matter. We offered changes to the master plan that accurately represents the NAS's highest level and most refined recommendations complete with a glossary so that the reader can accurately interpret what the NAS is saying. We believe changes such as ours is necessary to even get back to neutral while clearly communicating exactly what the NAS concluded. We even recommended to the Department than an alternative would be to include the entire executive summary, with a glossary, which provides even more detail.

However, we also agree with the BRTF member that even the entire executive summary would fall short of accurately describing the state of the science surrounding MPAs of various levels of protection. We believe that only a careful, unbiased, and transparent review of the actual protections utilized in areas studied in the scientific literature record can actually fix the bigger problem expressed by the BRTF member and we would welcome that as well.

The second area we would like to comment on regards a paraphrasing of recommendations we made in our letter of August 27 on page 58 of the draft.

Reading the comment in the draft master plan a typical reader would conclude that we recommended that the SAT not provide ratings of how they believe various MPA proposals will satisfy regional and MLPA objectives.

To the contrary, our letter expressed instead that ratings should be more robust and also be more understandable in regards to the underlying science that leads to the rating. In essence, it's a request that the science panel be more informative to the rating process.

To paraphrase the situation, we are asking that instead of a meteorologist saying the temperature outside is high or low, it is much more informative for a meteorologist to say its going to be 95 degrees or 40 degrees. That is a far more understandable and informative comparison.

We believe the SAT should develop methods of measuring these items that link to the underlying science data. We would suggest that the ratings be developed based upon available information regarding factors that affect ecosystems such as biological removals and physical habitat impacts. We believe there are many scientifically compiled sources available in both those areas, including catch reports, bycatch studies, and records of physical impacts on habitats. We also further requested that the ratings be communicated similarly to a peer reviewable science report with references to the sources utilized so that the public can understand how the ratings were arrived at.

Finally, I would like to commend the I-team staff for their efforts in preparing the latest draft of the master plan incorporating a wide variety of inputs. I believe the document format presented greatly reduced the amount of confusion on the current status of this complex document and that great progress has been made.

Thank You,

Bob Osborn
Fishery Consultant
United Anglers of Southern California